



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,  
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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is overgrown with brambles, nettles, and fruitless corn. Christ approaches in the night-time. Christ in His everlasting offices of prophet, priest, and king. He wears the white robe representing the power of the spirit, the jewelled robe, and breast plate, the rayed crown of gold, interwoven with crown of thorns, not dead thorns, but now wearing soft leaves for the healing of nations. Now when Christ enters the human heart He bears with Him a two-fold light, first the light of conscience, which displays past sin, and afterwards the light of peace. The lantern carried in Christ's left hand is the light of conscience, it falls only on the closed door. The light which proceeds from the head of the figure is that of the hope of salvation; it springs from the crown of thorns and though itself sad, subdued, and full of softness, is yet so powerful that it entirely melts with the glow of it the forms of the leaves along which it crosses, showing that every earthly object must be hidden by this light when its sphere extends.

To me as I have looked at it, in the library of Keble Chapel, it seems something too sacred for analysis. It is the Imago Christi, it is a revelation of what sin is, for it is a revelation of what the love of God is. As S. Paul, in maintaining his ministry, bases his right to the apostleship on the words, "Last of all, He was seen of me also," so when to the pure heart of our artist, which had sought tokens of the love of God, in the light on mountain glory, in green sward, in gleaming sea, in face of all, there comes this open Manifestation, he too may base on that vision an apostleship among men. "I recognize," he says, "through all, a divine charge, a Father's adjuration to faith and trust. Is it beside the mark, in writing of my professional life, to say this? I think not, for I wish always to paint, as men are supposed to write, what I believe." For such an one, we Christians believe, there awaits a fuller revelation, that beatific vision, which Bunyan's pilgrim anticipates. "I see myself now at my journey's end; I am going now to see that head that was once crowned with thorns, and that face which was spit upon for me. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of, and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His name hath been to me as a civet box, yea, sweeter than all perfumes; His voice to me has been most sweet, and His countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun."

## THE TRUE BASIS OF A RATIONAL EDUCATION.

BY THE REV. H. H. MOORE, M.A.,  
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THOSE who are desirous of knowing what is the best kind of education for themselves or for their children are thrown into great perplexity on the very threshold of their enquiries and reflections by the many conflicting and ever-varying theories of education, each having the support of weighty authorities. The subjects of study also are so numerous, each having its own special value and claims, that they are at a loss to know which part of the valuable cargo to select and which to throw overboard. Now, in this and all similar cases of perplexity, the only way to a proper solution of the problem is to hark back to first principles. I propose, therefore, to try to ascertain and indicate the course by which we may discover *the true basis of a rational education*.

My hearers will no doubt think it very presumptuous for anyone not possessed of exceptional ability, learning, and experience, to attempt a solution of the perplexing and important subject which I have ventured to treat of.

For, in the *first* place, to be fully qualified for pronouncing a correct judgment upon this question, a man ought to know perfectly every branch of human learning, and to have tried every system of mental discipline and culture. He ought also to be endowed with such a pure and impartial reasonableness of intellect and singleness of character as to be incapable of being moved by preferences and prejudices begotten of personal tastes, talents, experiences, and associations.

In the *second* place, this question is the one which has longer and more than any other been a vexed question, a subject of perpetual discussion, dispute, and difference, the stumbling-block of philosophers, teachers, and legislators in all ages.

My answer to such a personal objection is simply this, that, when doctors differ, the poor patient must examine, think, and decide for himself. When the scales are equally weighted with the opposing opinions of leading authorities, he cannot shirk the responsibility of throwing his decision into the balance on one side or the other.

I am about to contend, therefore, in this section of my paper that the only rational and adequate scheme of education is that which is based on the recognition of man

(1) As a being of a threefold nature, the possessor of spirit, mind, and body;

(2) as standing in a threefold relationship, (a) to God, (b) to his fellow-men, (c) to nature;

(3) and which consequently provides for the exercise and cultivation of all the parts and faculties of spirit, mind, and body;

(4) which teaches as much as possible of all existing knowledge of God, of man, and of nature;

(5) and which enables him to understand and perform the various acts and duties consequent on his relationship to God, to his fellow-men, and to the physical universe.

Such a scheme of course we see at once to be impossible to carry out *in its entirety*. The whole of a man's life would be insufficient for the mere acquisition of the knowledge implied in such a scheme, even supposing him to be gifted with all the mental powers required for so many and varied subjects. For men cannot give up a life-time to the acquisition of knowledge, and to the harmonious cultivation of all their powers. It is true that these two works ought to be going on in some degree during the whole of our life. Every day we ought to learn something more, and gain additional resources and strength; but we must be doing something else also of nearer and more pressing necessity. With the vast majority of us, jealous duties claim us for their own in the early dawn of life's light, when the child has only just entered on his pilgrimage: and Labour, a hard and searching taskmaster, leaves but little time for Thought, his twin-brother, to do his share in the moulding of their common pupil. If such a high ideal as that just outlined could ever be practically attainable by man, it would have been in the days of old, when time moved more slowly and life's burdens were lighter, and the sphere of

knowledge was more circumscribed. It was, perhaps, most clearly grasped and most nearly attained by those ardent "lovers of the beautiful," the ancient Greeks. As the first Lord Lytton said, "The notion of this all-accomplishment, mental and corporeal, is an old one. It is one upon which the character of the ancient nations, and of Athens especially, was formed. Alcibiades and Pericles were but incarnations of the genius of their country. But, in truth, the task of circling the round of knowledge was more practicable two thousand years ago than it is now; books were few, speculations contracted, learning flowed with a mighty stream indeed, but not from numerous sources. All the fruits of the divine tree were near at hand to the wanderer, and not scattered, as they are at present, in myriad grafts over the surface of the globe. If this was their advantage in the mental, so in the corporeal education; the life which the ancients led—their habits and their customs—so entirely dissimilar from the indolent apathy of modern times, were well suited to perfect all their faculties, and to gift with all the graces. The bath and the gymnasium, which made a necessary part of their existence, served, without an effort, to strengthen and to embellish. Their very habit of existence brought them beauty. Again, the laws which, at Athens, were referred entirely to the people—who had to decide not more upon their taxes and their ministers than upon refinements in music or innovations at the theatre, to approve the new statue, and consider the ornaments of the projected temple—served to diffuse the popular attention over all the sublimer arts and elegancies of life. It was necessary to have an eye to grace, an ear to poetry, a nerve to beauty, in order to discharge the daily duties of a citizen. These causes combined gave to our ancient models that character of the 'all-accomplished,' which the moderns, under different circumstances of society, can never but imperfectly attain. The division of labour has become necessary to a vast and complex order of civilisation, and, no longer living in petty cities, but over-populated nations, one man cannot hope successfully to unite the poet, the soldier, the philosopher, the legislator, the artist, the critic. The true character of the universal has passed away for ever." Yet Milton propounded a scheme which can be called none other than universal, and he himself

fell not far short of attaining this ideal and difficult standard. After declaring in his own stately manner that he calls a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously, all the offices of peace and war, he proceeds to chalk out a general outline of rational studies for young gentlemen of twelve to twenty-one, grammar, arithmetic, agriculture, natural history, geometry, astronomy, geography, fortification, architecture, engineering, navigation, history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures, as far as anatomy, and the art of medicine. All this to be assisted by "the helpful experiences of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries, architects, engineers, miners, anatomists." And the above, by the by, before the tyro enters the rural part of Virgil. Then come ethics, theology, politics, law as delivered by Moses, and, "as far as human prudence can be trusted, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas," and thence "to all the Roman edicts and tables, with their Justinian, and so down to the Saxon and common laws of England, and the statutes." Join to this French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew; "where-to it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee and the Syrian dialect." Thus accomplished, the pupils are to be made poets, authors, and orators; and instead of cricket in playhours, they are "to serve out the rudiments of soldiership, in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping, fortifying, besieging, and battering; besides trips after the first two or three years"—after which Milton gravely declares he would not be *much* for their studying—"to our navy to learn the practical knowledge of sailing and seafight."

But here it may be objected "why trouble ourselves with thinking of such a universal education, which not one man in a million has either the means, the leisure, the abilities, or the desire to acquire, and when all that we want to know is how to educate (1) the working man's child who can spare from the task of bread-winning only the minimum of time and attention requisite for learning imperfectly little more than the three R's, and (2) the children of the middle and professional classes who, although able to spare a longer time for school education, yet cannot afford to take long and roundabout courses of preparation for their life's work when short cuts are available.

The answer to this objection is not—like the objection—*simple*, but *complex* in its character.

In the *first place* it is absolutely necessary to take a comprehensive survey of the whole subject and scope of education if we would rightly understand even one small part of it. It is impossible to arrive at a correct appreciation of the value of any one department of learning without estimating it in its relations to other branches, and to its bearing on man's destinies and duties. If the intending settler is limited by his narrow means to the purchase of only one acre out of a wide district, all the more reason that he shall be in a position to survey all the area and to select just that one which is most suitable for his purposes and wants. If you may eat only one dish at a feast, all the more need to see all the dishes on the bill of fare so as to select the best and most satisfying. If the scholar equipping himself for life's campaign is only allowed a small knapsack for the storage of his mental wardrobe, all the more need to be careful in determining what are the few indispensables for his outfit. If out of a large variety of mental exercises only one or two can be pursued, all the more need that the scope and effects of each and all shall be correctly ascertained, and that course of discipline pursued which under the existing restrictions will most fully develop the particular powers most needed. The State cannot legislate even for the working man's child and decide wisely on even the miserable minimum of education which he shall be compelled or must be restricted to acquire, unless it first of all makes a philosophical inquisition of the complex character of his nature, and of the relationships in which he stands to God, to his fellow-men, to the State, to nature, and to the economic and industrial circumstances of his own life and position, country and age. Of this fact we see proofs in the various educational views of the age, which succeed one another in rapid rotation and competing popularity, much as the fashions in ladies' dress vary from season to season. At one time the popular conviction was in favour of encouraging a religious education as the only sound basis of individual morality and national safety, at another time religious instruction is to be pushed into a corner or ousted altogether to make room for more extended secular knowledge. At one time we are told that compared with some other

nations our children are wofully backward and ignorant, so subjects are multiplied, the standard of examinations screwed up, the scholars forced and crammed to the utmost degree. Then it is found out that their health and constitutions are being injured by undue mental strain, and the cry is for head work to be lessened and a larger proportion of time to be given up to gymnastics and military drill. At one time it is a purely "book education" that is aimed at, then comes the complaint that such a system is entirely one-sided, and is producing a race of lads who are averse to manual labour and ambitious only to be clerks; that it is for want of a training in technical science and handicrafts that we are being beaten in industrial competition by our continental rivals, and forthwith all our schools are to be turned into laboratories and workshops. So in our Universities, at one time the ideal of a truly liberal education was fulfilled by a course of classics and mathematics. Now, the object of every fresh turn of the wheel of University statutes is to see how much less of both these subjects can be taken into the system, and how many more of all the "ologies" and specialities can be absorbed. Such reactionary swings of the pendulum from one educational craze to another, and such eager adoption and hasty rejection of ill-balanced views must needs arise when no comprehensive and philosophical view of the whole field of speculation has been previously taken.

There is also a *second* important reason for surveying the whole range of learning and of mental discipline and exercises preliminary to fixing the minimum standard requisite for any particular class or individual. It is this—to preserve us from falling into certain common errors and delusive fallacies of the age. For instance, one of the greatest dangers and mistakes which our generation is liable to fall into is that of narrowness of aim and motive, arising in various cases from various causes. With too many the traditional respect for the old system of classics and mathematics exclusively is still omnipotent. Another large class, awed by the vastness of the field of modern research, and dazzled by the victories won by specialists in every branch of science and mechanical invention, would have us learn one thing, and one only, and that thoroughly. By far the largest number think *that* only of value which will *pay* best, which can be turned the most

easily and speedily into hard cash or daily sustenance. Another class is ardent for some one branch of study which their individual tastes or powers make congenial to them, and they are prone to attach undue value to it, and to deprecate other studies proportionately.

Now this tendency of our age to intellectual myopia, to lower our nature to the level of our occupations, and to confine them to the limits of the workshop and the filling of our till, is strongly to be reprehended, and carefully to be avoided.

And firstly, on *moral* grounds. Our nature possesses an immense capacity for improvement, both mental, moral, and physical, and it is a sinful waste of nature's gifts if through indolence or indifference we fail to develop and improve our endowments. It is a kind of suicide if we wilfully and needlessly permit any of them to decay or die from want of exercise and culture.

Secondly, the effect of a narrow aim in education, and of unduly restricting the range of subjects and discipline, is to produce a one-sided, imperfectly developed nature, suffering from many deficiencies of intelligence, taste, and judgment. As in the body there are so many muscles, sinews, and nerves, that not one, two, or even three exercises, but many, are needed to bring all into action and to develop their strength, so with the mind—in order to obtain a harmonious development of all its parts it needs to be employed on many subjects in many ways. Ruskin says very happily on this subject:—"As our bodies, to be in health, must be *generally* exercised, so our minds, to be in health, must be *generally* cultivated. You would not call a man healthy who had strong arms, but was paralytic in his feet; nor one who could walk well, but had no use of his hands; nor one who could see well, if he could not hear. You would not voluntarily reduce your bodies to any such partially developed state; much more then you should not, if you can help it, reduce your minds to it. Now your minds are endowed with a vast number of gifts of totally different uses—limbs of mind, as it were, which, if you don't exercise, you cripple!" Such cripples will necessarily be produced by a narrow system of education, but we should not be content with being maimed, imperfect creatures; we should help and encourage our children and youths not to remain such. The whole world is framed and society constructed by

Divine Providence to prevent such a dwarfing and crippling of man's nature. Constantly are we stimulated and invited by the beauties of nature, the amenities of literature, the wonders of science, the passing events of the world's history in our own time, the records of antiquity, and everything in fact, to a liberality instead of an exclusiveness of tastes, to an expanded instead of a contracted sphere of thought, to an endless variety instead of a perpetual monotony of objects, pursuits, ideas, knowledge, training, and experience.

Another, a third objection to narrowness in the range of subjects and discipline in our scheme of education is that the vast majority of pupils will not find in so scant a mental bill of fare the kind of food for which they have a taste. The old system, that has tyrannised so long over the youthful intellect of the nation, afforded no choice of pabulum beyond classics and mathematics, varied only by mathematics and classics. Thousands of youthful minds full of strong healthy natural instincts and powers have been starved on such unpalatable diet, there was nothing in it which could feed the cravings and wants of their nature, their intellectual appetite was weakened and killed by having only indigestible food offered to it, there was nothing in such subjects to which their young feelings and tastes could respond; mental activity became narrowed to treadmill work, and in disgust they recoiled from it and sought outlet for their activities and impulses in bodily indulgence or exercises. Unless we can provide for a child at least one subject congenial to its tastes and powers, its mind remains uninterested, stagnant, passive, its intelligence is not quickened, its powers are not set in motion. In fact if we do not succeed in developing tastes, *i.e.*, mental affections or likings, we have failed of the chief object and value of education. Bacon has called Admiration the Seed of Knowledge. It is not only the seed, but also one of the most valuable fruits of knowledge. For what is the highest end and effect of education, but to excite our admiration and love for all that is noble and wonderful, beautiful and good, and so lead us step by step, onward and upward, from beauty to beauty, from wonder to wonder, to fix themselves at last on the Author of all beauty, the Worker of all wonders. Besides, who more miserable and despicable than the man whose condition is expressed in the words "Nil admirari," and who

more happy than the man who finds objects of admiration and sources of enjoyment everywhere?

The commonplace objection, of course, will be alleged against studying a wide range of subjects, that it will produce shallowness and superficiality, whereas the exclusive pursuit of one or two subjects will produce depth and thoroughness. But in reality a narrow specialism is much more justly open to the objection of shallowness and impoverishment of the intellect, and unfitness for life's varied requirements. As the eye, if kept constantly fixed on one object, would by degrees lose its strength and adaptability of focus, its sense of colour, distance, and proportion, so with our mental vision, if confined exclusively to one occupation or study, it is too apt to forget the real relative proportions and value which it bears to others, and from studying only that which is near becomes incapable of seeing greater beauties or objects of more value and importance at a distance. Men who give themselves too exclusively to one pursuit, who accustom themselves to measure all things by one standard, who have but one taste, who imprison themselves in one narrow room of the fair and spacious palace of knowledge, these men lose the sense of proportion, and therefore the power of forming correct judgments about things. As the first Lord Lytton said: "Perhaps no men are more superficial in their views than those who cultivate one branch of learning, and only one branch. Perhaps no men are less superficial than those who know the outlines of many. The men who on the contrary are so careful to avoid the superficial, who plummet only one source of learning, these men are not only superficial, they are the truly frivolous, they grow so wedded to their one pursuit, that its pettiest and most insignificant details have a grandeur in their eyes. They are for ever poring over the animalculæ on one leaf of the Eden tree; they cannot see things that are large, they are spending their lives in the midst of the prodigal world in considering the hundredth part of the properties of a mineral!"

From this loss of the sense of proportion, from this danger of becoming the slaves of one idea and taste, from this narrowmindedness and mental deformity, we are saved only by a course of general study of many various subjects. In this way only can be produced a healthy all-round

development of tastes and faculties, what the Germans call "manysidedness," in this way only can we acquire width of mental vision, variety of ideas, and correct balance of the judgment. By a general study, I mean a study of the principles, outlines, and main facts of the subject. It must be thorough and exact as far as it goes, though not carried deeply and exhaustively into details.

At the same time, however, that we study a variety of subjects and cultivate a variety of tastes, in order to acquire breadth of culture, we must also study at least one subject as fully and as far as possible. For by this means the mind receives its most vigorous training, it acquires habits of thoroughness and concentration and mastery over details, in short, depth of culture.

Now it will be evident to all what an advantage will be secured if that particular subject which is to be pursued more deeply and mastered more thoroughly than others is also the one which is most congenial to the tastes and power of the student, and at the same time the one which he has to follow as his life's occupation, and as the means of obtaining his livelihood. For in this way we shall enlist both the tastes and the sense of self-interest in the prosecution of that subject. We always do best that which we like best. It is only into work that we like that we throw all our energies and interest. In work that we do not like, only the half of our powers are aroused and set in motion. If a boy likes a certain study or work, or if he feels that his very living and welfare depend upon it, then the constraint of liking or of necessity or of both is brought to bear on him, and he exerts himself with a will. Of course he must also have the opposite discipline, viz., of learning to do what he does not like, because that is one of the most necessary duties and disciplines of life.

I hope then that in this first division of my subject I have succeeded in proving the proposition with which I set out—that the only rational and adequate system of education is that which is based, as I said, on a full recognition of the manifold faculties of man, and of his manifold relationships to the complex universe of Divinity, humanity, and nature with which he is linked. It is only by a system comprehensive in its scope and range of subjects and discipline that we can be saved from all those mistaken courses, and from all those

imperfect and one-sided systems, which would only produce a maimed, badly-balanced, and distorted specimen of humanity. It is only by such a comprehensive system that we can produce a full, adequate, and harmonious development of man's faculties, and fit him for the various duties and requirements of his life.

We have then ascertained by all these preliminary reflections that the scheme of education which we want must comply with the following conditions and fulfil the following requirements:—

It must be such a system as would, among other things—

- (1) aim at the harmonious culture of the whole man;
- (2) which would impart as much knowledge as circumstances and time allowed of his relations to God, to his fellow-men, and to nature;
- (3) which would train and qualify him for fulfilling the duties consequent on those relationships;
- (4) which, while imparting knowledge, would also train him to the independent exercise of his observation and reason, and develop intellectual tastes or likings;
- (5) which, while trying to give a knowledge of the results and main features of as many branches of science as possible, would also try to give as thorough a knowledge as possible of some one or two subjects, these to be preferably such as would most directly minister to the life's occupation or be most congenial to the tastes.

(To be continued.)